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November 21, 1962

WASHINGTON EMBASSY REPORTS RE EVENTS IN CUBA

Reports dated November 19 from Embassy state: 1) Cuban press same date highlighted US "arrest" and "torture" members Cuban UN Mission who "have shown themselves against policies of Pentagon and CIA." Evidence national support for Castro five demands and Castro November 15 letter to U Thant given full play. 2) Reduced air and shipping services and a month of full mobilization have caused no visible cracks in economy. Morale has not decreased during past two weeks. No evidence state mind army or high government officials. 3) However, thanks to vastly improved VOA programs, general public beginning get facts present situation. Absolutely essential VOA broadcasts continue. 4) No news Mikoyan-Castro talks. Castro and followers insistent consideration of "dignity" and "equal treatment" Cuba be given. These Cuban concerns subject to exploitation by VOA. 5) Comparative calm underlies anxiety and tension. Hard core has become harder. 6) Fidel Castro not appeared public since November 7 and whereabouts not reported for past five days. Neither nor Raul Castro present at November 18 dinner for Mikoyan given by President Dorticos. Characteristic of Castro demonstrate defiance by making himself inaccessible this time. His personality as leader is declining although communications media keep his statements continuously before public.

Reports of November 20 state: 1) Press same date highlighted Castro November 19 letter to U Thant. El Mundo reports Castro discussed letter with Habana University students during informal visit to University night of November 19. "Attack" on Cuban vessel Rio Damuji by unspecified aircraft featured. 2) Rumors circulating that Lazaro Pena, communist and trade union head, was dying.

Report of November 17 stated that based on Embassy observation over preceding ten days no indications split within Cuban leadership. However, leadership narrowed to include only most loyal followers Castro brothers and to exclude most veteran communists.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR

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